

# DPW UPDATE

July 2003

## Double Duty for this San Diego Elite

by Jessica Eslinger, Editor

Leticia Arellanes, administrative secretary III in the DPW Director's Office, is more than just a County employee. She doubles as a high-ranking security guard for Elite Show Services Inc., one of the most respected full-service security and event management companies in the nation.

For more than four years Arellanes has provided administrative expertise for the County in the Alternate Public Defender's Office, the Office of Financial Planning and the DPW Director's Office. She's spent countless hours coordinating board letters and referrals, processing travel requests, paying inter-departmental bills, managing supplies and arranging meetings.



*Arellanes hard at work in Director's Office.*

During this time, she's also spent many weekends and evenings outside her County office, sporting the bright red Elite Show Services Inc. polo shirt and regulating business and entertainment venues across the County.

"I'm good with people, so Elite management asked me to work the post at events like the San Diego County Fair."

Depending on the event, Arellanes boasts different security titles. When she's Command Post Supervisor, she takes care of staff questions, staff breaks and shift coverage. When she's Quality Control Manager, she makes sure all staff have on the proper uniform, carry the right equipment and look professional at all times. She also works crowds and roves stadiums looking for suspicious activities. Most common venues include concerts, Chargers and Padres games, conventions, USD special events, and

of course, the San Diego County Fair.

"I like the Elite crew," said Arellanes. "Most are a lot of fun and great to work with."

Though "regulating" has its perks, it also requires a lot of time and dedication. In the more than 200 events she's staffed so far, many have required 8-10 hour shifts, some have provoked frenzied crowds, and several have caused awkward staff situations.

"A few years ago, the Fair had sandcastles and beach-like water ponds on the infield of the racetrack. One of the security guards was assigned to work the 'beach area,' got confused and ended up walking to the real Del Mar Beach."

She said after hours of trying to keep surfers and swimmers out of the ocean, he phoned into the command post where Leticia was working, and said his job was simply impossible. Arellanes gave him directions back to the Fair and to the appropriate beach area so he could finish his shift.

In another Fair incident, a frantic man called after hours, in search of his missing Clydesdale horse. Arellanes helped find the stubborn stallion and walked it back to the stable without a scratch.

As if two jobs weren't enough, Arellanes has also been going to school part-time. She just received her AA in General Studies from Southwestern college, and has a few classes left before transferring to a larger institution.

"I like to keep busy and am constantly learning, no matter what job I'm working or what class I'm taking," she said.

When asked about the future, Arellanes said she hopes to continue working both jobs, and is eager to see where her continued education takes her.



*Arellanes stops by the Fair's main entrance to give info to Elite's front gate security staff.*

## What's the Good Idea?

Field Surveys is a very busy section – so busy, they rarely have time for all the necessary training in survey-related subjects and procedures. Most training used to take place haphazardly, as situations arose. Phil Giurbino decided to change that and came up with a clever and efficient idea: peer-to-peer tutorials. Since implementation, his good idea has increased new employee training, encouraged current employee cross-training and improved section morale.

Aside from the usual certifications and job requirements, new Field Surveys staff are now required to get peer-training in photogrammetry, research, GPS surveys corner record preparation, equipment care and use, and basic topographic surveys. Training is divided in half-day sessions and administered by staff in these areas. This benefits the trainer and the trainee, because employees can feed off each other, sharing information and reinforcing their existing knowledge base. Giurbino proposed additional one-hour monthly meetings to discuss survey problems and solutions, and to make sure such issues are being covered in the tutorials.

Though the idea is still fresh and not formally structured, it's off to a great start.

"We all help each other regardless," said Jamie Nicholas, engineering technician II. "Each of our staff has a lot to offer, so we've welcomed this good idea with open arms."

She said trainees are much more inclined to learn from and teach people on their own level, so the peer-training program definitely improves communication, skill and work quality, and contributes to a well-rounded Field Surveys crew.

### *Training*

## Providing Productive Feedback

*by Kirsten Aaboe Hope, Training Coordinator*

How important is feedback? Imagine that you're learning to skydive. One of your first lessons is on how to fold your parachute so it opens properly when you pull the ripcord. You'll be folding your own parachute for your first jump out of the plane. When would you rather find out you've made a mistake folding it – when you're practicing, when you've folded it or when you pull the ripcord thousands of feet above earth?

Most of the time, feedback isn't a life or death matter, but in our department, it easily could be. Knowing how we're performing our jobs is something everyone needs to know and, in most cases, wants to know. We'd rather get feedback before we make a huge mistake, but along the way it's useful so we can correct and improve our performance.

Anyone in a leadership role can benefit from knowing how to give feedback. This can be someone who's formally designated a supervisor, a jobsite Competent Person, or a person designated lead on a project. Feedback helps people achieve peak performance; it steers people's focus toward positive results, encourages them to repeat good performance, and helps them learn new skills or correct less than optimal performance.

Feedback needs to be Timely, Balanced, and Specific.

### **Timely:**

- An interactive leader will give feedback as soon as possible after an event
- The details will be fresh in both the giver's and receiver's minds
- The person receiving the feedback can usually still make a change in performance

### **Balanced:**

- Effective feedback balances positive, reinforcing feedback and feedback for improvement
- Positive feedback lets people know what they're doing well, energizing them to repeat good performance
- Feedback for improvement lets people know how to enhance their performance by stating results and suggesting alternative behavior to achieve more positive results

### **Specific:**

- Effective feedback specifically describes what the person said or did and the results, whether they be positive or not.
- Information provided should be fact-based and focus on actual behavior

Short, sweet and to-the-point feedback gets the message across efficiently and effectively, since what is given is information that's useful and results-oriented.

Last but not least, is the manner in which the information is delivered. Delivering feedback in a way that is direct, sensitive, fact-based and not directed at the person, but their behavior, will significantly improve the chances of the person making good use of the information. More information on productive feedback can be learned at upcoming Interaction Management classes, whose schedules appear on the July – September 2003 Training Calendar.

### *Safety and Wellness*

## **FIRST AID KIT STOCKED?**

*by Len Snavely, Safety Officer*

In case of an emergency, your first aid kit will be your first priority. Do you know where it is? Do you have a designated person in your area who checks the kit monthly? First aid kits should be checked monthly to assure they are properly stocked. A good time to check them is when fire extinguishers are checked. To properly check the first aid kits, open the box and inventory the contents. Go further than just looking at the labels on the boxes; if the plastic wrapper is off or broken, look inside the box to see what has been used. Discard and replace any items whose expiration dates have passed. Discard and replace any items whose sterility is in question. To assure the kits are correctly stocked think about the possible type of emergencies you may encounter and the number of employees in your workgroup. Employees who work in the field have different needs than office staff.

OSHA Regulations provide a list of mandatory supplies for first aid kits. In addition to a wound cleaning agent, gauze, bandages and tape, here are some items that may not be found in or with older first aid kits: Resuscitation packet including latex gloves and barriers, scissors, tweezers, two elastic wraps, splint, one rescue blanket. In addition to these supplies, you may want to include other items such as ace bandages, butterfly closures, safety pins and a universal sling. Some work activities may require that larger eye wash bottles be kept on hand. The complete list of mandatory and suggested supplies is too long for this article. However, good common sense is helpful in determining how your kit should be stocked.

The ability to provide first aid has been enhanced with the addition of automated external defibrillator (AED) devices distributed to work sites throughout DPW. Some supervisors have added first aid breather kits to the AED bags. This is a great idea and provides additional latex gloves for helpers to CPR providers and a backup rescue breather until a used barrier from the readiness kit can be replaced. Incidentally if the AED provided to your crew did not come with a white wall mount cabinet, the device is intended to go with appropriate employees when they are in the field for the day. The AED should be checked monthly to assure the readiness light is still green.

## **WAW, What a Success**



Despite gloomy weather, hundreds of County employees attended the kickoff event for Watershed Awareness Week (WAW) on June 16. Tables circled the lawn displaying watershed maps, BMP's, stormwater pollution prevention tips and other educational materials. Marsha Cook (right photo), environmental health specialist II, administers the "I live Downstream" sponge stamp table, teaching passers-by how to keep our stormdrains clean.

# **DIVISION NEWS:**

## **Management Services**

### **Trucks & Kids**

Keeping in line with the County's Strategic Initiatives, "Kids, The Environment and Safe and Livable Communities," the DPW Web site has been revamped to show Internet users the softer, simpler side of public works. By clicking on the kid's "Truck Tour," visitors can learn all about DPW's heavy machinery, equipment and safety procedures through the eyes of a child.

This cheerful 2-year-old asks visitors to join him as he explores dump trucks, vector trucks, snowplows, graders and back hoes. In addition to vivid pictures, vehicle descriptions and even a video, he "talks" about the uses of each machine and how DPW employees maintain 100% safety on the job.

## **Engineering Services**

### **Hirsch: Quality Communicator, Coordinator**

Lawrence Hirsch, the new utilities coordinator for Engineering Services, says his strongest asset is his firm but friendly and aggressive yet tactful ability to communicate.

Also known as "The Great Expediter," Hirsch is the single point of contact for all CIP utility issues in the County's unincorporated areas. That means whenever new sidewalks, bike paths, roads and sewers reach the construction calendar, he coordinates with all the gas and electric, water and phone companies to make sure their plans are in compliance.



Hirsch comes to DPW from Puget Sound Energy, the Pacific Northwest's largest natural gas and power provider. He spent 14 years at the Bellevue, Washington location, most recently as Project Manager and Process Leader of Commercial and Residential Construction. Working on ventures for places like the University of Washington, Benaroya Symphony Hall and numerous housing communities, Hirsch managed all technical, economic, political and public issues for Puget; he planned, designed, scheduled and oversaw construction for utility projects. In addition, he used his strong interpersonal skills and effective leadership strategies to increase revenue and successfully negotiate with city officials, key public sector groups and regulatory agencies.

Living in Seattle, but born and raised in Los Angeles, Hirsch missed the sunshine and So Cal lifestyle. He also hadn't seen his family for a while and decided relocation to San Diego would not only bring him closer to home, but also would provide ample career challenges and opportunities.

So far, his three months with DPW have been pleasurable.

"The diversity within this department, and the wide variety of stakeholders I deal with on a daily basis is refreshing," said Hirsch.

"It's been very helpful associating with such educated, professional and above-standard coworkers."